

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

Held in Washington, D.C., February 21, 1947.

The fifth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1947 was held in its office in the Interior Department Building on Friday, February 21, 1947. The following members were present:

Mr. Finley, Vice Chairman,
Mr. Sterne,
Mr. Murphy,
Mr. Lawrie,

also H. P. Caemmerer, Secretary and
Administrative Officer.

The Commission convened at 2:15 p.m. for a joint session with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and representatives of a Committee on the National Capital. Due to a very severe snowstorm (the worst in nine years), Chairman Clarke, Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Reinhard were prevented from being present. The meeting for February 22 was canceled.

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1. PROJECTS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL CAPITAL CONSIDERED AT THE

JOINT SESSION: Major General U. S. Grant III, Chairman of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, presided, and in addition to the members of both Commissions, the following national organizations were represented:

American Federation of Arts
American Institute of Architects
American Institute of Planners
American Planning and Civic Association
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Landscape Architects
The Garden Club of America
National Society of Mural Painters
National Association of Real Estate Boards
National Sculpture Society.

General Grant expressed his appreciation of the fine representative gathering that had braved the weather in coming to Washington. He then cited

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE

FOR THE YEAR 1907

THE FIRST PART OF THE COMMISSIONER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1907, CONTAINS

AN ACCOUNT OF THE WORK DONE BY THE COMMISSIONER AND HIS STAFF

IN THE COURSE OF THE YEAR 1907

AND OF THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK

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projects that presented problems of concern to both Commissions and to the national organizations represented:

- (a) Urban Redevelopment Program. This has in view improving conditions in several sections of the city that threaten to become slum areas. The taxes collected from those sections at the present time scarcely pay for schools, fire and police force maintained in those sections from District funds.
- (b) Transportation Proposals, Expressways and Subways. The National Capital Park and Planning Commission is cooperating with the District Highway Department, which proposes to spend upwards of \$40,000,000 on improved highways during the next six years. The question of subways is still being studied.
- (c) Trends in Zoning Policy. Effort is being made to commercialize parts of residential areas. Recently the question of rezoning Sixteenth Street from Scott Circle to Lafayette Square was made the subject of a Hearing at a meeting of the Commission on Zoning, but while the application was denied, it was not settled finally. On March 5th there is to be another Hearing, when the question of allowing banks and office buildings on Sixteenth Street will be considered.
- (d) Problems of District revenues in relation to Federal land requirements. General Grant pointed out that where the National Capital Park and Planning Commission has bought park land in the past 20 years, reducing taxable areas by 7%, there has been a 24% increase in taxation in those areas. All admit that the share of annual contribution by the Federal Government (which amounts to about 10%) should be increased. In 1900 it was on a 50-50 basis, which is equitable, considering the fact that the Government of the United States is the great "factory" or institution here.
- (e) Engineerx Commissioner's Six Year Program. This proposes an expenditure of \$228,000,000 during a period of six years, due to much needed improvements and expansion in highways, sewers, schools, fire and police stations, hospitals and the like, due to the more than 300,000 that were added to the population of Washington during the War period. The program is being studied, including representatives of Citizens' Associations, before being taken up with Congress.
- (f) Lincoln Memorial Background. This relates to the Veterans' Hospital. General Grant stated that this is a project of special concern to the Commission of Fine Arts. Mr. Finley reported that the plans for the hospital are progressing favorably.
- (g) World War II Memorials. General Grant called attention to the National Stadium that has been authorized by Congress, and explained the possibilities in the Anacostia Park area for it. Still other memorials will be proposed in due time.

1948-1949 and 1950-1951

2. SKETCHES FOR WARM SPRINGS MEMORIAL TABLET: Under date of February 20, 1947, the following letter was received:

Michael Francis Doyle,
Chairman

Homer S. Cummings,
Treasurer

Electoral Colleges of the United States
Fortieth Presidential Election 1944
1500 Girard Trust Building, Philadelphia, Pa.

February 20, 1947.

Division of Fine Arts Commission,
New Interior Building, Room 7000.
Washington, D.C.

Attention: Mr. Caemmerer

In view of the great haste, we are sending herewith, by special delivery, three sketches prepared under Mr. Sinnock's direction, and wish your suggestion of approval immediately, if possible.

Could you kindly, therefore, send the same to me by return mail with such suggestions that you may make, or with your approval of the sketch.

It will be necessary for us to send this sketch to Mr. Basil O'Connor, of the Warm Springs Foundation, New York, as he requested to look at the same before final order is made.

Assuring you of our deep appreciation of your interest and thanking you for everything you are doing herein,

I beg to remain,
Very sincerely yours,
Michael Francis Doyle.

The Secretary reported that about two weeks ago Mr. A. D. Taylor, Landscape Architect, consultant for the Warm Springs development, called in company with Mr. Doyle, and presented a preliminary sketch for the proposed bronze tablet to be placed on "the little White House" at Warm Springs, in which President Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945. The completed tablet is desired for April 12th this year. Mr. Lawrie happened to be at the Washington Cathedral, and arrangements were made for Mr. Taylor and Mr. Doyle to see him.

Mr. Lawrie stated that he inspected the sketch and disapproved it, with the advice that a good designer be procured. They got Mr. Sinnock to help them.

[Faint handwritten notes at the bottom of the page]

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

12-2-1941

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Mr. Lawrie inspected the sketches here presented and had the following comments to make:

I prefer outline of sketch marked L, but I think the mouldings should be more in the Georgian character, since the top suggests that style. Also the very round voids right over the medallions ought to have a truer shape of a Georgian broken pediment.

The medallions above mentioned refer to the obverse and reverse of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Inauguration Medal, 1944, to be reproduced for the tablet.

Regarding a suggestion made by Chairman Clarke (over long distance telephone) that he would like to see incised letters in script style used, the same as on some of the fine bronze tablets at Williamsburg, Mr. Lawrie said:

"I doubt if engraved script would be in keeping with the medallions in relief and the type of mouldings."

The sketches and data as above indicated were sent by the Secretary to the Chairman in New York City, who expressed a desire to see the sketches, and for a letter to Mr. Doyle.

3. NEW DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURT HOUSE: Under date of February 3, 1947, Honorable Chapman Revercomb, Chairman of the Committee on Public Works, United States Senate, submitted a copy of Senate Bill 450, "To provide for the acquisition of a site and for the construction, equipment, and furnishing of a building thereon for the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia and the District Court of the United States for the District of Columbia." Senator Revercomb desired a report on the Bill.

An inspection of the Bill indicated that it is similar to H.R. 4719, which was introduced by Congressman Lanham in the 79th Congress, and which was approved by this Commission. It places the building at Third Street and Constitution Avenue, Northwest.

Accordingly, Chairman Clarke approved the Bill and reported to Senator Revercomb on February 7, 1947 (Exhibit A) accordingly. The Commission confirmed the action of the Chairman.

4. RELOCATION AND RESTORATION OF THE FRANCIS SCOTT KEY MANSION. The Secretary reported that the Columbia Historical Society is anxious to see the

Mr. Gandy informed the witnesses that the following

exhibit is being:

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some of the fine work done at the exhibit, Mr. Gandy said:

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Francis Scott Key Mansion, at 351b-18 M Street, Georgetown, immediately west of the entrance to the bridge, moved to a vacant lot adjacent to the east side. At the new location the house will not interfere with the K Street Elevated Roadway, which is scheduled for construction in the near future. Senator Taft has promised to help in the matter of legislation. It is proposed to secure \$65,000 from the Government for this project, allowing \$50,000 for proper restoration of the house; \$10,000 for grading and landscaping, with a colonial garden; and \$5,000 for furnishings, fees, etc.

Mr. Murphy and the Secretary visited the house recently, and Mr. Murphy reported that he considers the scheme feasible and a worthy project. It was pointed out that efforts have been made to restore the house since 1906. All land involved, including old and new site, and the house, are now owned by the Government. At the present time the house is in a very dilapidated condition, and this is the last chance to save this historic mansion, in which the author of the "Star Spangled Banner" lived from 1808 to 1828.

The Secretary reported that at a morning session of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission held today he presented the project, and that the Commission interposed no objection to the relocation of the Key Mansion.

The Commission of Fine Arts considered the matter, and likewise interposed no objection to the relocation of the Key Mansion to the site proposed. It was agreed that this should have been done years ago.

The Commission adjourned at 5:30 p.m., to reconvene at 6:30 p.m., at the Lars Anderson House, 2118 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., where a meeting was held (after a buffet supper) on Problems of and Plans for the National Capital. Lieut. General Raymond A. Wheeler, Chief of Engineers, spoke on the merits of the L'Enfant Plan; Honorable Guy Mason, Commissioner of the District of Columbia, on fiscal problems of the District; and Major General U. S. Grant III, on pending plans and projects for the National Capital. The representatives of the National Organizations were invited guests.

COPY

February 7, 1947.

Dear Senator Revercomb:

I have to report, in behalf of The Commission of Fine Arts, that the Commission approve Senate Bill 450, "To provide for the acquisition of a site and for the construction, equipment, and furnishing of a building thereon for the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia and the District Court of the United States for the District of Columbia."

It has been noted that Senate Bill 450 is similar to H.R.4719, which was introduced by Congressman Lanham in the 79th Congress, and which was approved by this Commission.

Considering the importance of the location proposed for the building, it should of course be monumental and appropriate in design for being in proximity to the Capitol Grounds.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(SIGNED) GILMORE D. CLARKE,

Chairman.

Honorable Chapman Revercomb, Chairman,
Committee on Public Works,
United States Senate,
Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT A

November 7, 1947

Dear Mr. Tolson:

I have to report, in compliance of the Department of Justice, that the Committee on the Administration of the Government, established by Executive Order 9835, July 11, 1947, has completed its study of the Department of Justice and has submitted its report to the President. The report is being submitted to the President in the form of a letter from the Committee to the President, dated November 7, 1947. The report contains a number of recommendations for the improvement of the Department of Justice, and it is hoped that these recommendations will be accepted by the President and the Department of Justice.

Very truly yours,

W. J. Brennan

(Enclosure) (100-100000)

W. J. Brennan

Enclosure
W. J. Brennan
November 7, 1947

W. J. Brennan

MINUTES OF THE 225th MEETING
of the
NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
held on
Friday, February 21, 1947

<u>Page</u>	<u>Par.</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1	1	Minutes
1	2-7	Sec Land Purchase Section
1-3	8	Radio Tower Vicinity of Riggs Road and B. and O. Railroad - Station WOOK: (See also Par. 12
3	9	Restoration of Key Mansion: (See also Par. 13
4	10	General Accounting Office Building
4	11	Federal City at Suitland
5	12	Radio Tower Vicinity of Riggs Road and and B. and O. Railroad: (See also Par. 8
5	13	Restoration of Key Mansion: (See also Par. 9
6-11	14	Joint Meeting with Professional Societies' Committee on the National Capital and Members of the Fine Arts Commission.
12	15	Rezoning of 16th Street
12-14	16	St. Elizabeth's Hospital
14	17	Sec Land Purchase Section
14	18	Land Transfer
14	19-20	Sec Land Purchase Section.

14. Joint meeting with Professional Societies' Committee
on the National Capital and members of the Fine Arts
Commission:

At 2:15 the Commission met with members of the Commission of Fine Arts and the Joint Committee of Professional Societies. The following officers and members of the Joint Committee on the National Capital were present as guests of the Commission:

Mr. Robert Woods Bliss, Chairman
Mr. Horace W. Peaslee, Vice Chairman
Miss Harlean James, Secretary-Treasurer

American Federation of Arts
Robert Woods Bliss
Thomas Parker
American Institute of Architects
Major E. R. Purves
American Institute of Planners
Earl F. Draper
Byron R. Hanke
American Planning and Civic Assoc.
Hon. Clifton Woodrum
American Soc. of Civil Engineers
no representation
American Soc. of Landscape Architects
Markley Stevenson
Leon H. Zach
The Garden Club of America
Mrs. Gilbert M. Hitchcock
National Assoc. of Real Estate Boards
Harry K. Boss
Max Wehrly
National Soc. of Mural Painters
Auriel Bessemer
National Sculpture Society
Wheeler Williams
Members at Large
Harlean James
Horace W. Peaslee

Because of heavy snow, Chairman Gilmore Clarke and several members of the Commission of Fine Arts were unable to be present.

The Chairman opened the meeting with a brief statement of welcome and then proceeded to discuss the problems and matters of mutual interest to those present:

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(a) Urban Redevelopment: - the Chairman stated that on August 2, 1946 Public Law 593 was enacted providing for redevelopment and rebuilding of the slum, blighted, and other areas of the District. Under this Act the Commission is directed to make and develop a comprehensive plan of the District which shall serve as a general framework or guide of development within which the various project areas may be planned. The Commission is also directed to make surveys, etc., in connection with this plan. " request for funds for the comprehensive surveys has been forwarded to the Bureau of the Budget and by it to Congress, including a request by the D. C. Commissioners for funds to undertake the surveys necessary to determine the lowest one-fifth income bracket.

Three areas have been tentatively selected for redevelopment, namely: Barry Farms Area, in the Southeast Section; Marshall Heights, also in the Southeast Section; and a limited area in the Southwest Section. These have received the tentative approval of the D. C. Commissioners and are now being made the subject of more intensive and detailed studies by the staff of the Commission. The members of the land agency have been nominated by the President and the D. C. Commissioners, and are now waiting confirmation by the Senate.

Mr. Nolen reviewed the various factors which lead to the selection of the three areas proposed for redevelopment.

(b) Transportation report, expressways and subways:- The Chairman discussed the report made to the Commissioners of the District of Columbia by a firm of consultants employed by them to study the transportation problems of the District, including expressways and subways. The report contains recommendations for placing some of the streetcar lines underground. The Commission Staff is now engaged in studying the various proposals and will make definite recommendations in the near future. In some respects, the recommendations contained in the consultants' report differ from the principles heretofore established by this Commission and their economic justification is questionable.

(c) Trends in Zoning Policy:- The Chairman stated that gradual departures from the established zoning regulations and restrictions will ultimately lead to an undermining of the whole zoning structure and will become detrimental to the best interests of the city. A most recent example is the application to rezone the lower part of 16th St., from residential to commercial, and now a substitute proposal to permit the erection of office buildings and banks. The Chairman felt that this change would be unfortunate because 16th St. is now an important through residential street leading directly to the White House and the change will not only detract from the appearance of the approach to the White House, but will greatly increase the volume of traffic on 16th and the adjoining streets, which are not designed to handle the increased volume. He also predicted that the establishment of office buildings and banks will gradually lead to a complete commercialization of the street in later years.

(d) D. C. Revenue Problems:- The Chairman stated that as officials of the District reviewed the financial problems of the District during the morning meeting with the Joint Committee, he had nothing further to add at this time.

(e) District Engineer Commissioner's Six-Year Program: The Chairman stated that the Engineer Commission recently proposed a Six-year Plan of capital expenditures and improvements in order to equip the District to handle its increased population. The Commission is studying each of the chapters of the report and will make recommendations thereon to the District Commissioners in the near future.

The report provides for the expenditure of about \$228,000,000. which is considerably in excess of the amount the District Revenues can bear at present. The report has raised some very serious financial problems.

(f) Lincoln Memorial Background:- The Chairman discussed the various proposals that have heretofore come before the Commission for the development of the Nevius Tract in Arlington County, overlooking the Lincoln Memorial. Heretofore the Commission has taken the view that the various proposals, including one for a large hotel and apartment development, would be entirely incongruous. In recent months, the Veterans' Administration has examined this site with a view to erecting a large Hospital. The Commission did not oppose this project on the ground that it would be undertaken by a Federal agency which would be interested in preserving the harmony and dignity of the Mall and the Lincoln Memorial, and it would avail itself of the expert advice of the Commission of Fine Arts.

(g) War Memorials:- The Chairman predicted that in the near future various proposals will be advanced for war memorials and in all probability one will take the form of a stadium or auditorium. A memorial to the Marine Corps is now under consideration.

(h) Site for District Court House Building:- The Chairman stated that the Commission has given consideration to a proposal to house the Federal Courts on the site at the northeast corner of 4th and Constitution Ave., acquired some years ago for the development of a municipal center.

(i) Thorofare Plans:- The Chairman discussed briefly the Commission's thorofare plan for the District of Columbia and environs and added that some progress has been made with Virginia and Maryland officials in getting certain features of the plan adopted.

(j) Fort Drive:- The Chairman discussed the recent proposal of two District officials to abandon the Fort Drive. He stated that the Drive

has a two-fold purpose, the primary and most important being its utilitarian value, in that it will provide an interchange for traffic between radial streets and highways entering the District and serve as a receiving and distributing freeway. This latter feature is recognized by the City Planning Profession as one of the relieving elements of traffic congestion. The Chairman added that while it may be true that in some instances the Drive will parallel city streets, those streets cannot handle the volume of traffic that the Drive will be able to handle. Also, that while the certain District officials recommended that the land be sold for development, actual examination of the land has brought out the fact that only a very small percentage of the land could be used for building purposes. It is either too rugged, too limited in size or for other reasons not at all suitable for building purposes.

Several members of the Joint Committee agreed with the Chairman that undue and erroneous importance has been placed on the Drive for pleasure purposes whereas it will actually serve a very beneficial and utilitarian purpose from a traffic standpoint. In discussing the District Official's estimate of \$35,000,000 to build the Drive, the Chairman stated that this figure is greatly exaggerated because the Drive could be developed in stages, leaving the more expensive structures such as overpasses and underpasses for later construction, if and when the need therefor arose. The staff is now engaged in making a complete study of all phases of the Drive.

(k) Stadium and Auditorium as War Memorials:- The Chairman reviewed the legislation enacted by the last Congress which resulted in the establishing of a Stadium Commission charged with the duty of selecting a site and determining the type and size. While that Commission accepted the Commission's recommendation for the East Capitol St. site, Senator Bilbo, then Chairman of the Stadium Commission, favored a covered stadium with a 200,000 seating capacity. Legislation was recently introduced to erect an auditorium as a National War Memorial, of sufficient size to accommodate conventions, operas, etc. The Chairman felt that the area around the Pentagon Building offered excellent possibilities for war memorials of limited size. He added that the National Park Service is now engaged in making a study of possible sites in the Park System.

(l) East Capitol St. Development:- The Chairman discussed the features of the Commission's proposed East Capitol St. development extending from the Capitol grounds eastward to the River. The Commission's plan is based on the premise that there are not enough building sites in the northwest area to accommodate the future Federal office population, and that the area should not be further congested. The Commission's plan affords the opportunity of erecting office buildings along East Capitol Street, and because of the character of the surrounding property, affords the added opportunity for employees to establish their residences in this area. The stadium and armory and a large parade ground will comprise the eastern terminus of this development.

(m) Federal City development at Suitland:- In answer to questions the Chairman stated that the proposal was merely "speculative" thinking on the part of Public Buildings Administration when it was entrusted with housing and it is not now being sponsored by any Federal agency. It was merely the outgrowth of an idea of expanding the Federal building area and developing it as a completely controlled Federal development.

(n) Inspection of Central area model:- The Commission and guests then viewed the Commission's Central Area Model located in the Art Gallery and the Chairman explained the various features of the plan. Questions were asked about the proposed bridge at Alexandria to afford a by-pass route for traffic not wanting to pass through Washington. The magnitude of a stadium seating 200,000 was compared with a scale model of the Pentagon building and found to be somewhat larger, also many times larger and higher than the Capitol.

(o) Planning Authority:- The Chairman stated that when the Commission was first organized one of its first problems was to coordinate the planning activities of the suburban areas with those of the District. The State of Maryland established the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to cooperate with this Commission and engage in land acquisitions. Cooperation with them has been excellent.

The Virginia General Assembly created the Northern Virginia Planning Commission but did not give it much power and it never functioned adequately chiefly because the same area was occupied by three Governmental Agencies with much local power, namely: Arlington County, Fairfax County and the City of Alexandria. Since then the State has passed Planning Commission Enabling Laws and Zoning Laws which can be taken advantage of by any city or county. These three Governmental jurisdictions now, therefore, have well-established planning and zoning Commissions and our Commission is working as actively with them as it can.

(p) Other matters of special interest to the Professional Societies:- In answer to questions of which subjects the Commission considered of most importance to the Professional Societies, the Chairman replied that, from the standpoint of traffic the Fort Drive should be preserved; serious consideration should be given to the proposal of the District Consultants on Highway program; that the Mall roads be developed as freeways; study should be given to the District financial problem; the acquisition of land for the park and parkway system should be completed; and the recreation system plan should be completed.

(q) Rezoning of 16th Street:- Mr. Harry K. Boss, a member of the Professional Societies group, expressed his personal opinion that the Zoning Commission should permit the rezoning of 16th St., from H St. to Scott Circle, to permit the erection of office buildings and banks, but without commercial signs. He felt that such a change would enhance the

beauty of the street and be vastly superior to the old buildings now located on 16th St. The Chairman replied to Mr. Boss that the development of 16th St. is far from stagnant and pointed out that within recent years three of the city's finest hotels or apartments have been erected there; that the commercialization of 16th St. will destroy the last remaining barrier which prevents the Central Business District from further decentralizing itself and moving in a northwesterly direction; that while the Central Business District comprises only 1-7/10% of the District, it pays 23% of the real estate taxes and must therefore be protected from further decentralization; that the street system is not adequate to handle a further commercialization of 16th St.; that any increase in the 110' commercial area will have a tendency to deprive owners of property now so zoned from capitalizing on their potential property values on which they have been taxed in the past; that while the Commission is not concerned with the problem aesthetically, it is concerned with the economic factors and the effect of this change on the city plan as a whole.

Mr. Robert Woods Bliss, the newly elected Chairman of the Professional Society group, expressed the appreciation of his group for the opportunity to meet with the Commission and discuss the various problems of mutual interest to both groups. The guests of the Commission then withdrew from the meeting.

